FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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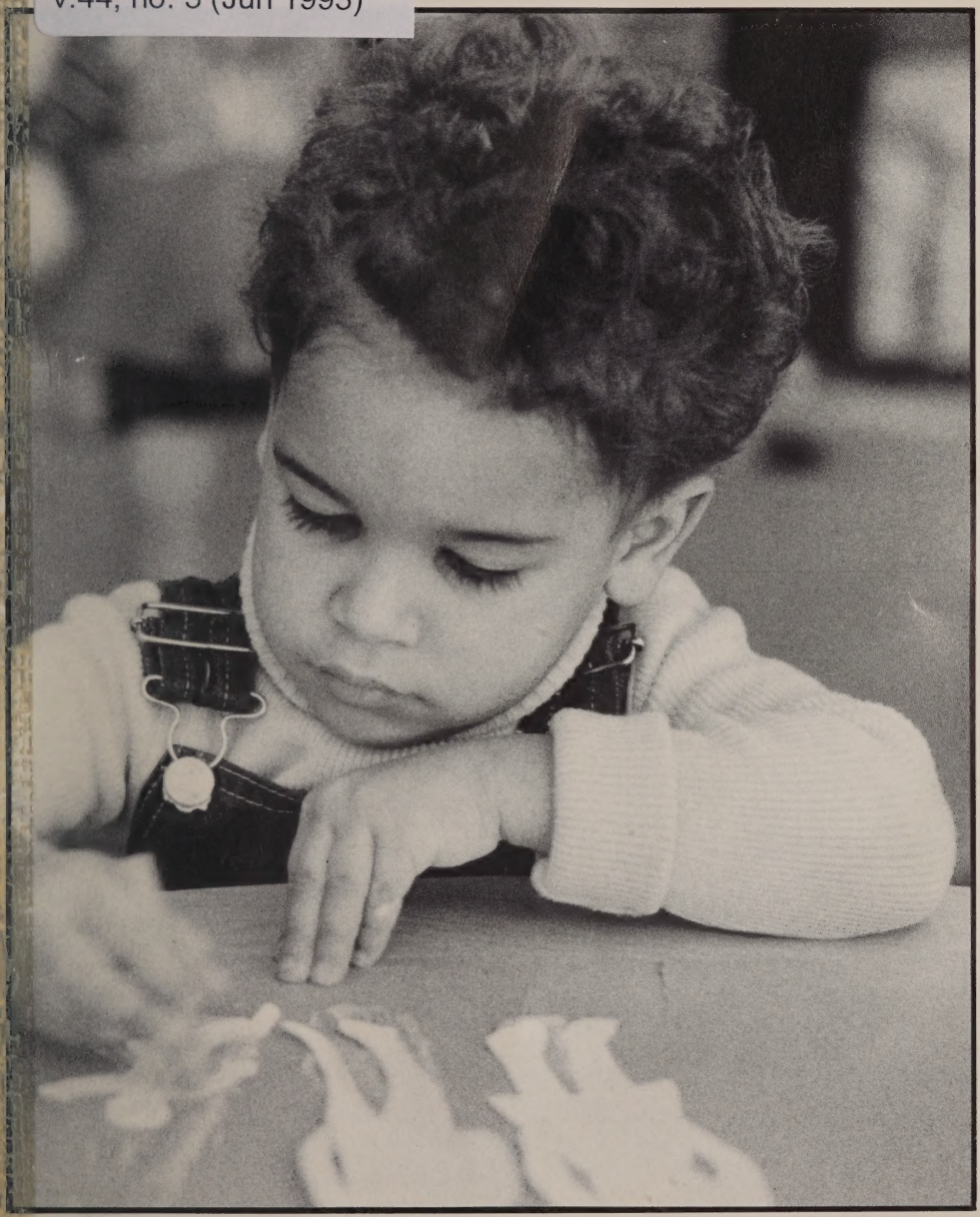

The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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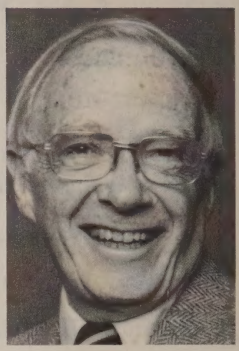


Love God by serving others. Every faith tradition preaches that message, and Fellowship in Prayer's particular mission has always been to freely provide copies of this publication to all who ask, regardless of their economic circumstances. As a result we get letters like this:

> The spiritual nourishment I receive from *FiP* is passed onto hundreds of people from many countries and backgrounds through my work in a waiting room at Texas Heart Institute. Thank you so very much.
>
> *Rosemary Mileti; Houston, TX*

> Please send a subscription to (name withheld). She is fighting cancer and needs the peace your magazine offers. She has trouble feeling God's presence in her life right now and I know your magazine will help her.
>
> *Carol Kettering; Rock Hill Furnace, PA*

We get such letters constantly. They tell us, in very poignant terms, of the deep spiritual thirst of men and women who are suffering the painful diminishments of body and soul that accompany illness, age, poverty, imprisonment, or abandonment, and who, for one reason or another, are without financial resources as well.

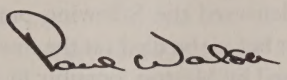
But what about all those whose needs are equally great, who don't know about us?

Wouldn't it be wonderful, we said, if we could put a copy of *Fellowship in Prayer* in every hospital, nursing home, prison, hospice, shelter and care-giving facility in the country! What a gift that would be to those most in need of the spiritual love and comfort that fill every page of *Fellowship in Prayer*!

We decided that we could make a significant start by printing an additional 50,000 copies and sending them to care-giving facilities in every state.

To do that on an on-going basis, we would need to ask individuals, corporations and foundations for major help. Would enough people respond to make that dream come true? It's up to you. You'll find a green

envelope toward the middle of this issue. We—and the men and women we hope to serve—would deeply appreciate your using it to send a check for whatever amount you can spare to bring healing and hope to those most in need. We thank you.



Paul Walsh

Thomas Merton, the author of over 50 books on the spiritual life, a Trappist monk and one of the great mystics of the 20th century, delivered the following prayer at a spiritual conference in Calcutta just before he died (at the much too early age of 53). The prayer—improvised by Merton, possibly in anticipation of his death—calls for "a new language of prayer" which would be rooted in direct experience of God:

> I will ask you to stand and all join hands in a little while. But first, we realize that we are going to have to create a new language of prayer. This new language of prayer has to come out of something which transcends all our traditions, and comes out of the immediacy of love. We have to part now, aware of the love that unites us in spite of real differences, real emotional friction. The things that are on the surface are nothing, what is deep is the Real. We are creatures of love. Let us therefore join hands, and I will try to say something that comes out of the depths of our hearts. I ask you to concentrate on the love that is in you, that is in us all. I have no idea what I am going to say. I am going to be silent a minute, and then I will say something. . .
>
> Oh, God, we are one with You. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh, God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being, because our being is in Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes You present in the world, and which makes You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

This prayer will be remembered for centuries like a great work of art. Not only for the beauty of Merton's "new language"—the spontaneous language of the heart—but because in a prophetic way it expresses everything that every man and woman on our anguished planet needs and

longs for: Immediate experience of God, and the sense of connection with one another that comes from knowing God as love.

Mary Ford-Grabowsky

William M. Stephens

I am so small I can barely be seen.
How can this great love be inside me?
Rumi

She saw the hungry and the thirsty and she gave them food and drink.
She saw the lame and the blind and she helped them to walk and to see.
She saw the outcast, the despised, the defenseless, and she made them feel wanted and dignified.
She made the powerful and the self-important aware of the plight of the untouchables, the outcasts of society . . .
She fought for the poor and suffered jail and persecution for their sake.
Fritz Eichenberg, speaking of Dorothy Day

It is not exaggeration to say that our times are apocalyptic. . . . We are challenged to prove we are rational, spiritual, and humane enough to deserve survival, by acting according to the highest ethical and spiritual norms we know.
Thomas Merton

Our work is nothing more than the expression of the love we have for God. We have to pour this love out on someone.
Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Know the Mystery:
that if that which thou seekest
thou findest not within thee,
thou will never find it without thee.
Wiccan Prayer

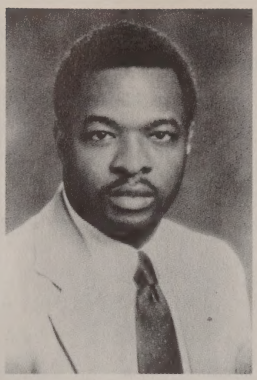
Injustice is rooted in a frightened heart.
Ram Dass

The kingdom of God is within you and among you.
Luke 17.21

There is great joy in darkness.
Deepen it.
Sanai

"A Man Who Had No Tribe": Reflections of an African-American in Africa

EUGENE A. BLAIR



This poignant meditation reflects the pain and conflict African-Americans feel as they work and wait for full social justice.

His words have always had power to me. Now these same words have become even more alive. Knowing his words and life is no longer an academic exercise. They are now my life line. In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois wrote (*The Souls of Black Folks*) that the black man in America was "ever aware of his twoness." Twoness is not a term that you will find in any dictionary. DuBois was saying that we are ever aware of the fact that we are Americans and yet Africans. We are both, but neither. I have come to know the power of the depth of these words after living for a year in Africa. This has been a journey. I have been touched spiritually and politically. I have been changed emotionally and economically. I have been challenged as a human being. I am not the same. I understand my own twoness.

I have been a sojourner. In the biblical sense, a sojourner is one who is seeking after God. A sojourner is a person of the promises of God for justice, peace, and righteousness. I have not been disappointed.

I left America on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, January 15, 1992. As I left, news of the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles was still on the prime time news. As I returned to America, just a few days before Christmas, I read the headlines that the KKK had erected a cross

Eugene Blair is the Dean of the Upper Room Chapel in Nashville, TN, and Director of Church Cultivation. An experienced spiritual director, he is working on a Doctor of Ministry degree in the area of spiritual formation.

on Fountain Square Plaza in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Some things never seem to change. But this time, my reaction was different. I was "ever aware of my twoness."

I went to Africa seeking answers, looking for insights, digging for the past, hoping to contribute. It was the realization of a goal, a hope, a dream come true. I was going to the motherland, finally. I had romantic notions and idealistic hopes about Africa. For me, Africa was my first

> I am an African and an American and yet, even more than that, I am a sojourner . . . As a sojourner, I am called to be a person of prayer.

home. As a child of the slave trade, I was an orphan in America. Now, it was time to go home. This was not my first trip. But now I was going to live in the land of brave warriors, proud women, noble traditions, the foundation of the Judeo-Christian history and experience. I was going home to the birthplace of civilization.

My travels have taken me to countries in the east, north, west, and the south. I have used every means of transportation on the continent. I have met persons from all walks of life. I have broken bread with missionaries, politicians, children, preachers, farm workers, youth leaders, and shop keepers. I have taught school, preached, led seminars and workshops, attended weddings and funerals. I have seen the power and beauty of African celebration at a church opening in Kenya. I have experienced the wonder of a reconciling God with blacks and whites in South Africa. I have seen the hope and anticipation of a better life to Uganda. I have seen the blood shed of tribal clashes and mob behavior. I have seen what corrupt government can do to the spirit of those who have elected that government to serve. I have seen old women bent over from years of carrying water and wood. I have been received with joyful dancing and singing in remote villages just because I was a visitor. I have eaten out of the same bowl with poor men and women and their children who live on less than $10 a month. I have been touched and moved to tears by the utter and sheer joy and laughter of children. I have made friends and, at times, I have been misunderstood. I have worshipped and prayed with persons from large urban churches to just a few, called by the beating of the village drum, gathered under a tree on Sunday morning.

This is one event that stands out among many for me. I went to visit

Tom Dunham

a friend in Nairobi one afternoon. Her gate was locked and her gardener came to answer my call for entrance into the compound. The gardener spoke several African languages but did not speak English and my Swahili was minimal. I spoke none of the languages the gardener tried to speak to me. We could not communicate. I ended up leaving a written note in English as my friend was not home at the time. I learned later that the gardener described me as a man who came to call "but he had no tribe." I was an African-American who was out of place because I did not have a tribal language, history, tradition, or story. Slavery took all of that away from me. I was indeed a man who had no tribe. I was so very much aware of my "twoness".

As I reflect on my sojourn and my twoness, an African and an American, several themes appear. First, the whole world is groaning under the pain of racism and past colonialism. All peoples everywhere have been touched in one way or another by the human need to dominate others based on the color of one's skin. Africa appears to be in a phase of reclaiming that which the colonist tried to destroy. Africans are sifting through what is left of traditional African religion and culture and yet face the 21st century. With colonization and independence came the reality that life could never be as it was before the white man came with ships, the Christian Church, and guns.

Africans are seeking to chart new courses with former colonists and overseers at times still holding economic and even political power. African Americans still seek liberation and justice in a nation viewed as the hallmark of democracy and freedom. The Rodney King incident and the rise of hate groups serve as reminders to us all that the dream is still to be realized. African Americans suffer from America's social ills, health care problems, and political misrepresentation in disproportionate numbers. The question still needs to be answered, "where do we go from here?"

All of us can learn a great deal from Africa. Africa has much to teach America and the world. In terms of human relations, there is much that cannot and should not be transported out of Africa. But Africa can teach us about devotion to religion, care of the earth, commitment to tradition, respect for elders, and love of family. Africa can teach us about community and communalism. Africa can teach us how to find God in the rain, the birth of a child, or the death of an elder. Africa can teach African Americans how to love themselves and take care of each other

Tom Dunham

no matter what the situation. Africa can teach African Americans to love the contributions people of color have made to the well-being of the whole world. Africans can teach us about our twoness.

Understanding who I am as an African and an American means understanding what Jesus meant when he preached the Beatitudes. Blessedness comes from having an adequate and realistic view of one's self. Blessedness comes when we are present for people and with people no matter what country we are in or what their skin color. Being in Africa and living with Africans in and of itself did not remove from the hurt, the anger, and the disappointment that racism has caused in my life. Understanding what Jesus meant by peace, mercy, purity of heart, suffering, persecution, and righteousness has taught me to respond to life differently. My sojourn has taught me to understand my own sinful nature and my need for an active and honest life of prayer.

My sojourn also taught me, again, to have an adequate and realistic view of other people. My romanticism and high idealism of going home to Africa have been tempered with the realization that all around the world people come under the same human fall of sin. People starve because of corrupt government. Foreign aid is stolen by greedy officials. All too often in Africa the best way to get something done is to bribe your way. I was robbed twice during this trip by Africans. Bloodshed is

common place and taken for granted as a part of daily life.

These issues are no different from the Iran-Contra scandal or the death of hundreds by AIDS or crack. We all need the power and love of God to make us whole again. We all stand as equals before a loving and forgiving God. America helped to create some of the woes of Africa and America must be called to do its part to create a better future.

I am an African and an American. And yet, even more than that, I am a sojourner. I am a child of the promises of God. As a sojourner, I am called to be a person of prayer. It is indeed prayer that draws my life together across the centuries of separation from my motherland. It is prayer that links me with millions of other sojourners who speak to God about Africa, elections for presidents, the KKK, and persons dying of AIDS. It is through prayer that I am changed and made more aware of who I am as a sojourner. It is prayer that guides my actions and decisions, my thoughts and hopes. It is prayer that allows me to understand and live out my twoness. It is through prayer that I am linked with the rest of the human family and global community.

As I end this part of my sojourn, I am more aware than ever that God loves me and my twoness and that God loves Africa. Africa is a beautiful display of God's handiwork through her people, the land, the cultures, the wildlife, and presence of the church. God loves those who labor in that part of the vineyard. God loves us all as we labor through this life weighed down with woes, cares, and brokenness. I have been reminded that there is hope, that God is still in charge, and that God's will can be done here on earth as it is in heaven. We have no need to fear the future or one another. For the future is as bright as are the promises of an everliving and everlasting God.

The Gift of Listening

WILLIAM R. VINCENT

A physican who cares—in the fullest sense of the word—participates in a holy experience with the parents of a dying baby.

Daniel was a full term newborn infant who appeared perfectly formed and healthy at birth, and then promptly developed a picture of life-threatening sepsis. As he became critically ill with rapidly deteriorating lung function he was referred for ECMO therapy (temporary use of an artificial lung). At that point I met Daniel and his parents in order to evaluate him for possible underlying cardiac disease . . . which he did not have. After that point I no longer had any official role in his care.

I saw the parents and the infant intermittently during the next few weeks, as Daniel went through a prolonged period on ECMO and finally was removed from the circuit. He initially appeared stable but gradually it became apparent that this infant had survived the early infection and shock episode, only to develop a progressive and severe process of lung destruction. Every effort to support him failed to alleviate severe lung malfunction. Despite all efforts to keep him nourished he had become a frail, emaciated one month old child who was slowly dying of respiratory insufficiency.

One day while walking through the ICU where Daniel was cared for I stopped to speak with his parents and offer whatever comfort I could. Daniel's mom and dad spent hours each day at the bedside of their child and hours more at home focused on his illness and his need to recover. The picture I saw at that moment told me clearly that the death of this child was imminent . . . and his parents were completely unprepared for this eventuality. Indeed, all of their energies were directed at supporting him and exhorting him to get well. As I spoke with them I had a strong desire to help . . . but I didn't know what to do.

A thought occurred to me which I initially rejected as inappropriate to my role or training. However since the thought had come to me in response to a desire to help, I decided to trust it and act on it. I asked

A physician who takes his spiritual practice as seriously as his medical practice, Bill Vincent is a pediatric cardiologist in Pasadena, CA.

Daniel's mom and dad if they had been in communication with their baby and they both replied that they spoke to him constantly. I then asked them if they had been listening to him, if they had been open to the possibility that he might have something he needed to tell them. They both responded that they hadn't considered this possibility but expressed an openness to try.

Two days later Daniel's mom told me that she had become very still and listened and had become peaceful over her child's critical status for the first time, but she had received no specific message from Daniel. Daniel's father told me he had received a simple but clear message from his child: "I'm O.K." He felt certain of the message and its source. He understood that this meant his baby would recover. I asked Daniel's mom and dad to continue to listen to Daniel over the next few days.

Daniel's mom received a continuing soft reassurance but no specific message. Dad had a second message. He clearly received "there isn't much time." He was confused and upset and told me that apparently he hadn't gotten the first message right. I asked him to consider the possi-

Tom Dunham

bility that both messages were correct, that Daniel was letting his parents know that he was dying . . . *and* that he was doing what he most needed to do at that time.

With understandable reluctance Daniel's beautiful and courageous parents agreed to be with this possibility for a time to see what would come up for them. Out of this opening they began to focus their full awareness on the impending death of their beloved infant child . . . and the possibility that he awaited and dearly needed their acknowledgement and deep understanding that he was on purpose . . . that he was indeed O.K.

Several days passed and Daniel's mom and dad were together at home at midnight. After a deep examination of their feelings they realized that they had been holding fiercely to a concept of their child's healthy body and his history to come as the only outcomes which could be permitted into their reality. In that moment of grace they jointly told their son that whatever he had to do . . . he must know that he will always have their full acceptance, support and undying love.

Daniel died quietly about twenty minutes later.

The gift of this holy experience continues to unfold, now seven years after Daniel's death. Mom and dad were blessed with a sense of completion and purpose, which remained ill defined, but nevertheless real and immensely reassuring. They spent virtually no time in what we usually call grief work . . . and instead sat by Daniel's grave and read to him from "The Little Prince". Mom was inspired to serve and has entered nursing. Dad remains quietly confused . . . and perhaps even amused . . . by the lack of certainty of everything he had previously depended on . . and of the wondrous gift of listening.

The Second Portion

Jacob slept with his head
on the sacred stone in hopes
of securing a vision

And the angels were ascending
and descending, going away from
and coming back to.

Surely, it takes fifty years
to evolve or uncage an angel
(the more primitive tradition
calls them "gods").

The first portion of our journey
is toward God, ascending; the second
portion is into God, descending;
the mystics know this—
and some others who hold rocks
in their hands like
they hold water.

Dann R. Ward

Dann Ward's poetry has been published in the USA, England, Japan and Canada. He lives in Birmingham, AL.

Rock Ritual XII

ROBERT O'ROURKE

From "aged, moonstruck traditions," writes Bob O'Rourke in his latest rock ritual, "I learn to pray."

Now that a man has walked on the moon the information from my 1958 encyclopedia may be incorrect, but it is sufficient to convince me there are rocks on the surface of the moon: lava rocks made millennia ago, pumice rocks, igneous rocks. Data enough to inspire a rock ritual.

Primitive people, including our own Native Americans, have always measured time by the moon. For the Blackfoot, Sioux, and Crow the "time" to hold their Sun Dance was when the moon was full. It was then, they believed, the eternal light of the Creator could be seen by the whole world. A sacred time, a time of celebration. Reminiscent of Saint Francis who spoke of "sister moon". One night when "she" was particularly luminous and bright St. Francis enthusiastically rang the monastery bell rousing the people of Assisi from their slumber. Frightened, they shouted to him asking what was amiss. Francis simply replied, "Lift up your eyes. Look, look at the moon!" Give thanks! Acknowledge God! Celebrate the wonder of creation.

These voices-of-the-past knew nothing of modern, space-age technology but from their own observations of nature they derived a reverence for life often lacking in today's sophisticated, scientific, factual world.

These ancient perceptions give me pleasure as I walk along the rocky ridges near my home. On moonlight nights I listen to coyotes singing to the moon and remember a Pima legend telling how the moon was mother to the first coyote. She birthed him in the deserts of the Southwest and left him alone as she continued her journey across the night sky. Little coyote tried to follow his mother but she disappeared over the western horizon. The only sound that night was a lonely coyote crying. Since that time, long ago, coyotes have always lifted their voices in harmonious chorus to the moon.

Folk art carver, writer, poet, Bob O'Rourke makes his home close to nature in Colorado. Lisa Smith, whose illustration accompanies this article, is Director of the Squash Blossom Art Gallery in Aspen, CO.

From these aged, moon-struck traditions I learn to pray:
Sometimes in the style of an Arapaho I lift my ceremonial pipe to the night sky;
Or, in the manner of St. Francis; I repeat his wonder-filled canticle:

> Praised be my Lord for our sister the moon, and for the stars, the which he has set clear and lovely in heaven.

And, often, like coyote, I howl!*

* Recently in Cheyenne, Wyoming, at a hearing to re-introduce the wolf to Yellowstone Park, the author and fellow activists howled like wolves.

Lis 1993

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Do you have a question of the heart or spirit that needs attention? Angela, our canine sage-in-residence, would love to help. Please write to her in care of FiP, 291 Witherspoon St, Princeton, NJ 08542, and she will give you her answer in our next issue.

Dear Angela,

Could you please share with us your thoughts concerning friendship? Thank you.

Sincerely,
A. Friend

Dear Friend,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak about my favorite topic. As I am sure most of my friends and fans know, I met my best buddy Barbara a number of years ago. Barbara is the first human friend I ever made outside my family circle. This friendship has been significant and transforming for me. Besides the obvious benefits of extra head pats, chest rubs, and exercise that a friend will provide, I am a more agreeable mutt at home. Just like other family members who go off on a Saturday afternoon to do their own thing, with my buddy I get to leave and come back just like everybody else. It's healthy when everyone, even the family dog, has a piece of life to call her very own. We all have something to contribute to our joyous family reunions. Because I've made a friend, I am a more productive participant in family life. Before I go on, let me say that having my very own friend doesn't discount or diminish the warm, loving, or loyal feelings I have for my family. But let's face it. A family just isn't the same as a friend. Your family *has* to let you back in, even if your paws are muddy and you have a flea problem.

With our friends, we get heightened levels of acceptance and forgiveness in our lives. With more of these commodities, we all look a little better, seem a little better, and perhaps even behave a little better, especially in the eyes of those who dazzle us with their acceptance. Whenever acceptance and forgiveness are present, we actually *are* better. When I

am fully accepted as the finicky, mischievous mutt I truly am, I always become better at it. In friendship there is great relief in knowing you are being taken as a package deal. We not only need to have our goodness noted and accepted, but we need uglies forgiven just as much. Being the recipient of acceptance and forgiveness is transforming. With a friend, you can be all of yourself without apology. Our friends see through us past our quirky behavior to our true perfect selves. They not only glimpse this perfection in us, but help us experience it in ourselves. My buddy sees that there is more to me than even I first imagined. In her company, I become what she believes I am. If she sees some of Lassie inside me, I become more Lassie-like in her presence. Such is the magic of friendship. Friends are capable of bringing out of us our very best selves.

Friendship offers still more. Since we experience more acceptance and more forgiveness from our friends, we are better able to love, accept, and forgive ourselves. By accepting and forgiving another, we end up doing

Cliff Moore

this for ourselves as well. I call this the gift you get through giving.

One of the lessons I've learned from being a buddy is that is it possible to be a sweet, selfish soul like me, and still turn out to be a reliable, giving friend. This I call the mystery of friendship. Despite my selfishness, my friend and I have worked out an arrangement of genuine give and take. First, we give each other our time. In our age of hurry up, this is no small matter. Sharing time may be the greatest gift two friends can give after acceptance and forgiveness. My buddy offers me her time to rub my chest or brush my coat. This helps her feel useful, needed, and provides her with an opportunity to be loving. In return, I invite her to join me in dog time. I shall be speaking about dog time in greater detail in a later column. For now, dog time is a place where life is slow and nothing gets done on time, but there are no consequences or penalties. My friend leaves feeling calmer, refreshed, and more herself. I've just gotten my own self soothed and spruced up. We have each answered the other's needs. There are other times when I meet the needs of my buddy. Sometimes I get an overwhelming urge to yowl and twirl in place. My buddy may choose this very same moment for a quiet, cozy lap-sit. What does a friend do when you're in a twirling mood but your buddy is in desperate need of a hug? Here is an example of how love conquers a little bit at least. I will allow my buddy to hold me against my will for two or three minutes before I squirm out of her arms and lap and run off to a place where I am free to twirl. Even a selfish critter can be a giver.

If I had to make a list of best things about having a friend, one thing that would be there would be the nose kiss. My friend is the only soul on the planet I know who kisses me on the nose. After you have been utterly yourself, a kiss on the nose feels great. My buddy is the only soul on the planet who lets me kiss her on *her* nose and hers is considerably smaller and more difficult to reach than mine is.

In closing, I'd just like to say that every day is a day of chicken and cheese when you have a best friend. Don't leave home without one.

Faithfully,
Angela

Serving Others in the Later Years

WILLIAM F. HAYNES, JR.

A 65-year-old woman with multiple sclerosis cares for others from her wheelchair.

Dr. William F. Haynes

Each of us may be thought of as a well-integrated combination of mind, body and spirit. Our wellness and our wholeness depend largely upon how well these three parts are functioning. In the case of a three-legged stool, the function of the stool would be lost if one of the three legs were missing or of unequal length. The mini-trinity of mind, body and spirit is akin to a three-legged stool. In order to be an effective whole person, all three parts must be interrelated and in concert with each other. Often we take for granted this precious gift called the human body and not infrequently fail to respect it. The way we use or abuse it can be a reflection of how we respect God. By choosing a healthy lifestyle, we are glorifying God and by trashing our body we are in a sense rejecting God.

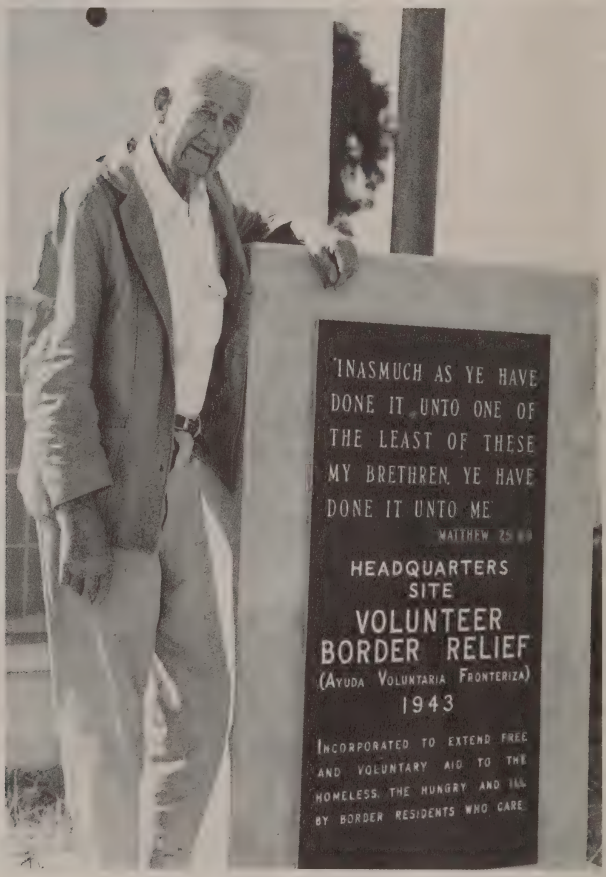
But what happens when illness strikes, a crippling accident occurs, or we are born with a physical or mental handicap or any combination of

Many whom she serves have disabilities less severe than her own.

the above? The following concerns a woman named Helen who has lived with multiple sclerosis for the past twenty years. She continues to serve as an inspiration to many, and her story should be told. Helen is a 65-year-old mother of two grown children and the wife of a retired school principal. When she was forced to retire from secretarial work about 15 years ago because of her illness, she decided to reach out to others as best

Dr. William Haynes, a cardiologist practicing in Princeton, NJ, is the author of A Physician's Witness to the Power of Shared Prayer. *His next book, tentatively entitled* Preserving the Aging Body Temple, *will appear in the spring of 1994.*

she could and as long as she was able. She began serving as a volunteer at a rehabilitation center 4 hours every morning five days a week. During the early years of volunteering, she had some difficulty in walking, and because of her unsteady gait, she required a cane to get about the various rooms. Her typical morning would consist of asking the patients if she could be of any help. "Can I write a letter or would you like someone to chat with? I am a good listener," she would often say. As the months went by, her condition continued to deteriorate at a very slow downhill pace. Before long, she found it necessary to resort to the use of crutches.



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She continued her visits nonetheless, always asking the same question, "Can I help you? I'm a volunteer; let me know if I can be of any assistance." She always seemed to get an emotional lift from her visits to the center; she felt she was being useful and this has given her a certain inner peace. In addition, Helen made many friends at the center. She now requires a wheelchair to make her rounds at the center. Despite the progressive nature of her handicap, she regularly devotes herself to the needs of others, quietly and without fanfare being a true servant of the Lord. Many whom she serves have disabilities less severe than her own. But amazingly, as her physical dexterity has decreased, her innate spirituality, her message of encouragement, has become more powerful. She now rides up to patients in her wheelchair and continues to ask the same question, "Can I help you? I am a volunteer; I'm most anxious to help you in any way I can."

. . . recent research has shown that peace of mind may enhance the immune response . . .

There are several miracles in this story. She feels useful despite her handicap. She senses the good she can do for others. There is a certain inner peace that she receives from this. She serves as an inspiration for the patients and staff as well. I am sure the Lord is using her as a channel for the healing of others and allowing her disease to progress at a far slower pace than many with this diagnosis. Could this be the fact that recent research has shown that peace of mind may enhance the immune response? Finally, despite the progressive nature of her condition, Helen has remained a "whole person." The physical component of her body temple, though diminishing year by year, has been compensated for by inner strength and the spiritual enhancement that has occurred.

Despite our own handicaps, spiritual, emotional, or physical, large or small, with God's grace, we too can be made whole and glorify God in our daily lives.

A Prayer for Peace

Send your peace, O Lord,
  which is perfect and everlasting
  that our souls may radiate peace.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  that we may think, act and speak
  harmoniously.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  that we may be contented and thankful
  for your bountiful gifts.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  that amidst our worldly strife
  we may enjoy your bliss.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  that we may endure all, tolerate
  all in the thought of your grace
  and mercy.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  that our lives may become a divine
  vision, and in your light all darkness
  may vanish.
Send your peace, O Lord,
  Our Father and Mother, that we, your
  children on earth, may all unite in one unity.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

Tom Dunham

A Path of Silver Light

ANITA WHEATCROFT

A childhood experience builds faith that will last a lifetime.

"No, it isn't magic!" My uncle assured the little girl overwhelmed with sudden awe.

"It is the way we see reflections of the moon!"

It was a summer night and we children sat either side of my beloved Uncle Hi, listening and learning from him. Among childhood's happy memories these visits are my most unforgettable. He served as a minister in a church in Saranac Lake in the mountains and lived with my grandmother. No matter where else we'd been vacationing from our apartment in Manhattan, we'd end each summer with them before school reopened. That particular summer, our parents had taken a trip together, after a turbulent year, and we children were left for a visit with Grandmother and Uncle Hi.

His name was Hiram Lyon. Most people called him Hi, but as a child I assumed his real name was Uncle High because to me he was a true hero, that kind of "larger than life" relative or friend every child should have. He loved children and was loved in return, because he really listened to our ideas and fantasies and fears. He told wonderful stories and sometimes taught us more than our teachers. Gray-haired and wise, he had that enthusiasm and wonder that belong to a deep faith.

We were sitting on the bank of the lake after a bonfire picnic, listening to wind rustling the pines and waves lapping on stones, with the pure air fragrant with evergreens. Uncle High had told us stories, and now was explaining about the stars and answering innumerable questions. He described the immensity of the universe, the smallness of our planet, and the endless reaches of outer space. I remember the awe, then terror, that crept over me. Before, the stars had been friendly windows through which heaven shone, or tiny lights festooned across the sky for our delight. Now, all-at-once, with head thrown back to see as many as I could, I was sucked up into the abyss of nothingness, that fearful howling wonder of whistling galaxies and outer space, and I felt tiny, insig-

A much published free-lance writer, Anita Wheatcroft lives in The Woodlands, Texas with her husband. Among her books are Expectant Parents *and* Promise to Joel.

nificant, and lost. Shivering, I crowded close to my uncle's rough jacket, putting both hands over my eyes to shut out the strangeness. The spell of that wondrous night was broken, and with it was shattered the small child's world of magic, of being special and unique and loved.

"Look at the moon," said my Uncle calmly, and I did. It had come out from a cloud covering like a good omen and threw a silver pathway across the black water right to me. Amazed, I jumped up and ran along the bank to see if my moon path would follow me. Then I called out to my sister to try it and she found it worked for her as well. My uncle, delighted with my discovery, let me run and bring the other family members on our camping party to come down and see, and sure enough, the moon's path came to each one of them as well.

All at once order and meaning were restored by that ladder of silver light and with it my trust as well. With a contented sigh I sat down on the bank again and now could look up at the stars.

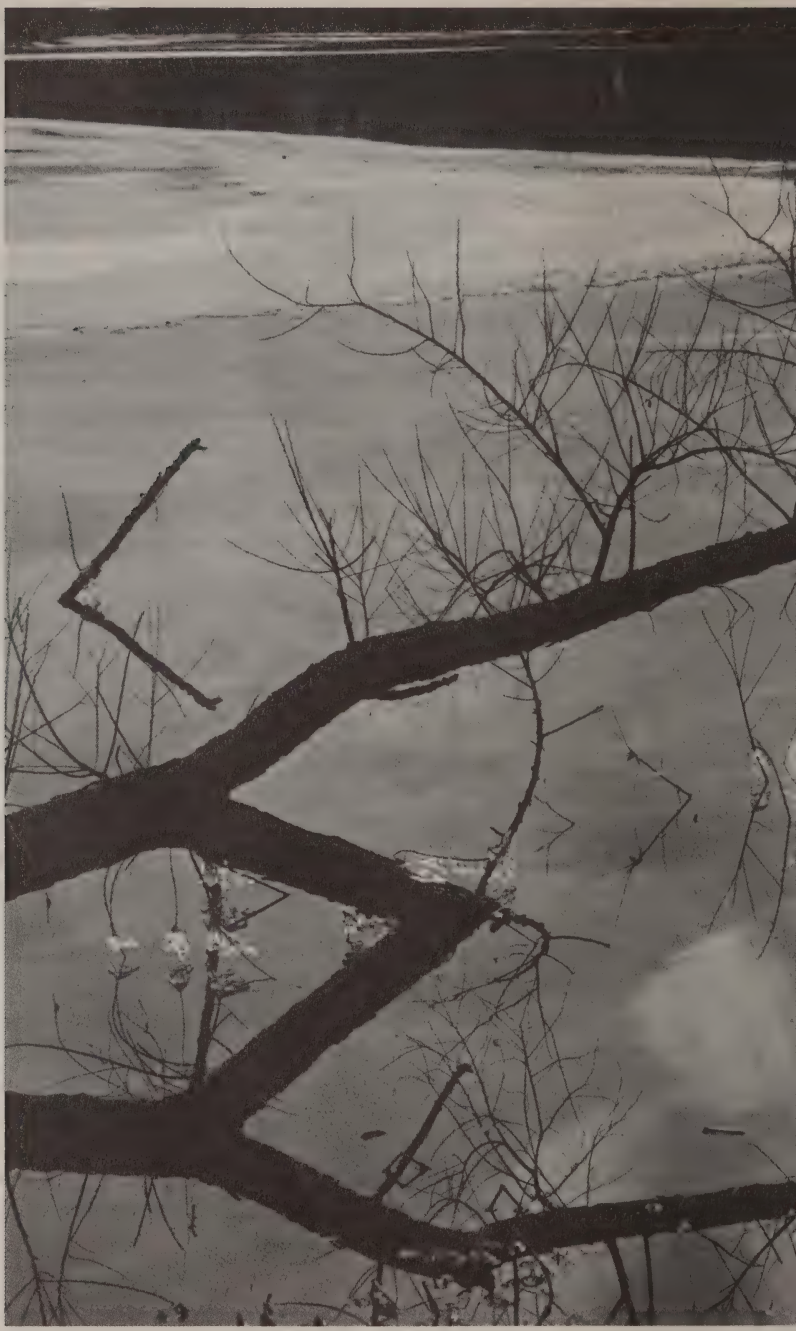
Typically my uncle did not burden me then with stories of refracted light. Instead he let me find my way into an insight deeper than such

> Gray-haired and wise, he had that enthusiasm and wonder that belong to a deep faith.

knowledge. Through questioning he led me to discover for myself that God's care and love for each of us is like that path of moonlight. Emerging out of vast emptiness, our beginnings and our destiny are too mysterious for us to comprehend. Not only are we infinitesimal specks on one small planet of a limitless, expanding universe, but our life span is like the blinking of an eye, in the long history of the world.

And yet . . . paradoxically I know, from that first encounter with ontology, who, in truth, I am: a unique combination of qualities and characteristics, which never occurred before, nor will again. Moreover, what is true of me is just as true of every man, woman and child who inhabits this planet. Most of all, however, that experience began in me a growing faith that each of us is rescued from insignificance and the haunting threat of meaningless life by God. Each of us is valued, cared for, and loved by God.

Later that night, curled up small and warm beside my sister, in our sleeping bag cocoons, I listened to night sounds of the forest and the



Cliff Moore

lullaby of waves. Closing my eyes I saw again that silver ladder from the moon and knew that all was well.

The incident did not recur back to me for many years. Then came a night when a particular problem loomed before me. I was discouraged and felt insecure about the future. Again, I felt that helpless anxiety of insignificance, of empty dark without light. Kneeling, I closed my eyes and asked for some kind of reassurance and hope. At once in answer the image came: the moon's reflections, making a silver pathway on dark water. And I remembered the magic secret learned that far off summer night beside the lake. Each of us must find it for ourselves - the path of shimmering light that leads from God straight to each of us, and to every person in this world.

Apologies to our canine sage, Angie, and her friend, Barbara Ackerman for omitting Angie's picture from our June issue.

What is Prayer?

ROSE TILLEMANS

It seems to me that prayer is our loving movement into God, settling quietly with God and then touching the universe and connecting with all of creation. God is in our relationships, in our struggles, in the world's struggles, not separate from them. When we take out time from the whirl we're in, we can focus on how God is with us in the events of our everyday lives.

My prayer time is in the morning before anyone is around. I sit with my cup of coffee facing the window which looks out on a park. I gaze at the trees, sky and earth. I make an effort to be in tune with the universe, to be with God in God's world. I welcome all thoughts that want to come except destructive ones. I believe that with good intentions and earnestness most things in my life are worthy of being contemplated.

Prayer for me is savoring my life in God's presence. It is trying to become attuned to the God within and around me. I think we are most human and prayerful when we let ourselves linger over our own scene. Our God-energy is deep within us, like a wellspring. When we are in this energy we live below the surface and draw God's strength and power to make us alive and prayerful. Then we can see more clearly how God is working in our lives. When we are in pain from our relationships, the children's struggles, the job's tensions, unemployment, the death of a dear one, our physical limitations, we cry out to the God of Comfort to be with us. Maybe that is all our prayer can be at a given moment. We tell God, "This is just too awful! Do something for me!"

It seems that taking time each day to savor our lives in God's presence can help us to move into the moments of our day with more ease. People who have long drives to work tell me they contemplate best at the wheel. Many people pray as they journal. Running or walking is good for others.

Out of our prayer must come an "attunement" with the suffering world. It means moving into the arena of other people's struggles. Watching the news or reading the paper is a call to prayer, to compassion, to justice-making.

Rose Tillemans is Coordinator at Peace House in inner city Minneapolis, where poor and homeless as well as economically comfortable people gather for meditation and community.

It is difficult sometimes to savor our scene or become quietly reflective. Maybe our prayer just has to be noisy after a battle or a disrupting experience. The same God who is deep within us is there in the unpleasantness also. Maybe God is the only one who understands our pain.

Giving thanks for the gracious gift or our divine-and-human energy is one way to end our prayer time.

From Tourist to Pilgrim

CHARLENE ALTEMOSE

Our bus, screeching to a grinding halt, jarred me from a groggy semi-sleep. As I rubbed my bleary eyes and gaped an uninhibited yawn, I asked myself: Is this place really so special? Will I make sense of what I'm about to see? Will I be a prey to that spell which, they say, grips everyone who comes here?

This is Varanasi, also called Benares, India's holiest city, built upon and nurtured by the faith of Hindus on the banks of the Ganges River. Believers offer flowers, burn incense, bathe in the murky waters, ask forgiveness of sins and hope to die here.

As I stepped out into the sultry pre-dawn, sights, sounds and smells unique to this place, greeted me with the force of a sledge-hammer. Like busy ants milling about, throngs scurried, hurried and flurried about.

Sunrise is very important to Hindus. They believe that to witness the birth of the new day is to share in its creation. The flowing Ganges symbolizes the Cosmic Power which sustains the universe. And so if you are at the river at dawn, you are merging the divine power with the human.

I was wafted into the human stream on its way to witness the daily spectacle. As I elbowed my way along, I felt like a part of a living kaleidoscope, with its rapidly-shifting scenes.

Suddenly, the human potpourri was funneled into a narrow maze which led directly to the river. We walked single file sustained by faith that something lies ahead.

But then, a "funny" thing happened on the way to the Ganges. With the suddenness of the summer monsoon, a strange feeling overcame me. I felt a sacred presence in this alien land. Someone greater was here, too. It was my God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God Incarnate and the Holy Spirit breathing forth love to all here. It was an eerie feeling. I felt so at one with these worshippers. No longer was I a tourist from afar, but I was a fellow pilgrim, another link in the chain of devotees on our way to praise God. My heart sensed a cosmic unity in this strange land. All was at one; all was sacred. No longer was I on my way to view alien worship. I was part of it, praising the Lord.

A Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart, a former professor of world religions, and the recipient of a Fulbright scholarship to India, Sr. Charlene Altemose is the author of numerous books. She has also been active in the Council of Churches.

We filtered onto a clearing in front of the ghats, the steps leading to the river. I caught my first glimpse of the sacred stream, the Ganges. I stood enrapt, in silence, in wonder, in awe. It's so easy to pray here. The whole scene throbs with a divine heartbeat.

What a paradox! The water is murky and muddy, and yet it's the symbol of purity and cleansing. Amid the cacophony and noise all around, I felt an inner calm and tranquil spirit. Through the confusion and chaos of a multiplicity of rituals, the splashing, chanting and clanging bells, the air was filled with a poignant unity of faith. All who come here inevitably are touched by the Divine, no matter how we pray or what we name our God.

I climbed upon a platform, the "Praying Ghat", for those who wish to sit in meditation. Aged gurus with flimsy loincloths draped over their spindly legs, sari-swathed women toting babes on bony hips, mahogany-

> It's only with the heart that we see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

skinned lads deftly balancing brass jugs on their ebony heads. There were priests, pilgrims, visitors and venders - all had come for what Varanasi offers.

The sights faded. I gazed toward the horizon. This was THE moment. The wispy gray mist lifted as if it was a stage curtain. The blood-red tip of the sun emerged from the womb of night; a new day was being born.

Temple bells clanged; pilgrims lifted their arms in adoration; bathers splashed in the waters. The dawn was greeted in so many ways, not in a chaotic din, but a unified concerto of faith and adoration.

I didn't listen, for I, too was playing in the pilgrims' symphony, as I shared the wonders and miracle of birth. It was one of those moments time ceased. There was no past or future. There was only Now. No longer was this a melange of individuals at worship, but all were melded into one immense act of homage. Yahweh was there; Allah, too. So was Jesus, and the Buddha, the Holy Spirit, Brahma, the Kami and all Divinity.

Rapt in the ecstasy of the moment, I basked in its mystique and only wished this moment could last forever. As my emotions settled, I plunged into a philosophical reverie. Why are we here? What has prompted each of us to relate to the Divine as we did?

All of us share the same human condition. We're subject to life's contingencies, and we look toward someone or something greater than ourselves.

Each of us has been born into a culture at a specific time in history. Time controls us; so does space. We can't be at more than one place at a time. From our upbringing and environment we've learned the ways and the means of life.

Among the legacies passed on to us is our "world-view", an attitude about life. We inherit our way of answering the mysteries of life around us and we're provided with an explanation of the Divine Power controlling our universe. This legacy is our religious heritage, our name for God; our way of relating to that belief.

Each religion has developed creative ways: traditions, rituals, customs, sacred writings and holy persons to communicate with the Divine. Each has come to know in their own way. It's the task of each person to relate to God according to the legacy passed on and of one's own insights and faith.

God is worshipped in so many different ways. Our human ingenuity is most creative in offering homage to the Divine. Almost every human

William M. Stephens

act has been ritualized in an effort to relate to God. I thought of how my faith has become more enriched as I witness other modes of worship.

Tears trickled down my cheeks as I thought about those who believe this rite at the Ganges is a "pagan" practice of unbelievers. But what faith is here! And how sincere it is, although it might not be my style.

I recalled a saying from the "Little Prince": "It's only with the heart that we see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye." Lillian Carter as a Peace Corps volunteer in India, had a similar experience. She wrote, "The Hindu prays to his god; and mine answers."

I can understand why so many are drawn to this site. God speaks so loudly here, that even one who is deaf to faith and religion, will in some way be touched by what they see here.

My symphony of faith ended abruptly as Rajiv, our guide, told me our bus was waiting.

Slowly, I rose, and took a last look at the sun which by now was above the horizon. I bowed a reverent *Namaste* to God, to the sun, to my fellow worshippers and to the Ganges.

With grateful heart I descended the narrow steps, "Thank you, Lord, for the wonder of this day. When things go wrong and I doubt your presence in my life, let this experience be kept fresh and alive in my soul."

As I stepped into the bus, Rajiv handed me a tiny copper vial, "Here, remember Mother Ganges," he said smilingly.

With tear-filled eyes, I accepted the gift and clasped it tightly, a precious memento of my "Symphony of Faith" at the Ganges. Today, that vial is one of my prized possessions. It's a constant reminder that the Divine is sensed most powerfully at times when we are open and willing to let God into our life. I recall that day when I was changed from a roving tourist to a devout pilgrim.

If You are Beginning a Recovery Program

RICHARD RIOUX

For this believer in the power of "tough love," addiction is a friend who has come along as a hope-filled challenge and opportunity.

Did you know that if we travelled at the speed of light, which is 186,000 miles per second, it would take us eight minutes to get to our sun and 100 thousand light years to cross the Milky Way Galaxy in which our sun is but one of 200 billion stars? If we boarded a spaceship and travelled at light speed for a million years we still would not reach the center of the universe. Just think of the enormity of such a universe, then think of yourselves in it. What is your size when compared to a universe of such enormous distances? What are you doing here? Where do you fit? What am I doing here? What are we doing here together? What could ever make us act if each of us were at the center of this universe?

Ten years ago a series of personal crises brought me to my knees. On that day, I surrendered to my own impotence before the God I was not certain existed. During the months that followed, I learned that God was in fact real. I began to see that I was having experiences orchestrated by God to make me aware of God's being. I came to believe that God was at life's center and that I was not. I began to redefine myself in the context of a God-centered universe. Recognizing the immensity and complexity of a universe with God at its center relieved me of the burden of having to be somebody. If there were more stars in the universe than all the leaves on all the trees in the world's forests, what did that make me? It made me close to nothing. I was nobody. I was insignificant. God was everything. I did not have to be somebody. Being nobody was just fine.

Letting go of society's definitions of success set me free to become whatever it was God wanted me to be. Life became exciting. A new enthusiasm for life descended upon me. I became an observer and conscious participant in a life God had designed for me. I could step out of

Richard Rioux is the administrator of an alcohol and drug treatment program in California. He has written numerous articles on the relationship between acquiring basic literacy skills and improved recovery from addiction. His manual on the uses of literacy in recovery programs can be obtained at no charge by writing Dr. Rioux at Box 55361, Santa Clarita, CA 91385-0385.

Janet Kerr

myself and watch the process. Life became a safari, a journey. I did not know what was around the next bend or over the next hill on the trail, but I looked forward to dealing with whatever awaited me. God was in charge. Whatever God thought I should experience to fulfill my destiny was up to God, not to me. I discovered and relished my own nothingness, and it became the ground in which my new life took root.

Would it bother you for me to suggest to you that each of you was nothing? Could you ever believe that you were really nothing? Do I offend you when I say to you that you are nobody? One of the reasons Alcoholics Anonymous places a premium on anonymity derives from the recognition that self-will and self-centeredness can never lead to lasting recovery from alcoholism and drug addiction. To believe that you can stay sober because you alone want to remain sober will lead to your most certain relapse. You cannot stay sober if you believe you can do it all by yourself. Alcoholics Anonymous requires its members to surrender to a power greater than the self, to believe that God is guiding the process of recovery, and to serve others. They, you, I, we can never be strong enough to regain good health without assistance from a power greater than ourselves.

"I think therefore I am," said the French philosopher Rene Descartes. Do you think this statement is true? Perhaps? Maybe? You're not certain? Whatever it is you think you are or think you can do, you can only really think about it and actually do it for a brief moment in space and time.

Life is hard on Planet Earth for most of its inhabitants.

Let's get back to looking at ourselves in the context of the universe. The universe has been around for millions of years. The distances between stars are immense. The nearest star to us in the Milky Way Galaxy is four light years away. It takes four years for light from that star to reach us. When you look up into the evening sky on a clear night you will see thousands of stars. The light from some of those stars has taken lifetimes to get to you. I'm forty eight years of age. To reach me, the light from many of the stars I see at night has been travelling 186 thousand miles per second for more than 48 years. That's simply incredible! And what does that make me? What does that make you? It is against this universal backdrop that I can say with a deep sense of relief that I am nothing. It

is against this backdrop, in the context of the universe, that I would like to ask you to consider beginning your process of recovery by accepting the possibility that you too are really nothing. Take the burden of having to be somebody off your shoulders. Focus on being nobody and start the process of recovery with this view in mind. If you want to become someone begin by being no one.

As difficult as your life may seem to you, you are probably better off than most of the people living elsewhere on the planet. Do you know what is happening in Africa? Starvation, disease and death grip thousands of people there each day. The same is true in other places not too far from where we find ourselves today. Life is hard on Planet Earth for most of its inhabitants. A long time ago, a young Jewish Rabbi said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Most people on Planet Earth are poor. They toil each day to place rice or bread on the table for their children to eat. They don't have resources to squander or opportunities to miss. They must make the best out of the very little they have. They're not looking for drugs or alcohol. They're trying to remain alive one day at a time, and they feel fortunate if they have a bowl of rice each day.

You're not in recovery because you've made all the right choices in your life, but don't give up hope. Being in recovery gives you a chance for new beginnings. It affords you the opportunity to start making the right choices. Getting involved in a program of recovery will allow you to become a better person. You will see life in a broader perspective. Your values will change. You will become a part of the solution to America's problems rather than a part of the problem. You will learn how to use your free time more constructively. On Friday nights, you might choose to stay home and read a good book rather than look for a place to party. On Saturdays, you might go to a museum to see a painting by Rembrandt or Matisse. On the Sabbath, you might go to a church or synagogue to improve your conscious contact with God.

Look upon your addiction as a friend who has come along to challenge you to become a better person. Look upon your effort to recover from your addiction as an opportunity to redefine your purpose, to establish new priorities, to make new friends, to get in touch with the spiritual side of your being. Look upon your first day without an addictive substance as the first day of a new life. This day is a gift given to you by God. Don't squander the gift. It might not be offered to you again.

Think about people you admire in the world around you. Do you admire the arrogant, the pompous or the selfish? I don't, and I don't think you do either. I admire people who are helpful and selfless. I admire people who give of themselves to others unconditionally. I admire those who build their characters by being of service to others. I admire people like Moses, Francis of Assisi, Florence Nightingale, Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. I admire the work Mother Teresa is doing in India today. I admire single mothers who work hard every day to feed their children and get them off to school. I admire fathers who read books to their kids before putting them to bed at night. I admire people in recovery who help others.

Anonymity is a good thing. Being nothing is a good thing. I would like for you to rid yourself of any need to be anything but the somebody your recovery program and the God of your understanding will allow you to become. Strive to be anonymous and let anonymity be your friend. Let the desire to become nobody be the fuel for your regeneration, for your rebirth and for your journey along the occasionally lonely roads that cross our planet.

Search for God in all that you do. Listen for the voice of eternity in all that you hear. Pray for words of truth in all that you say. Reach out to others in love. Give of yourself without expecting anything in return. Solve problems without letting anyone know you solved them. Change yourself. Try not to judge others. Be free in your nothingness. Enjoy your life's journey. Be kind to one another. Write your mother or father or daughter or son or friend or even your enemy a letter. Seek the common good. Find the common ground. Subordinate yourself to a common purpose.

Serenity is achieved when we "accept the things we cannot change" and seek in our nothingness to "change the things we can." Serenity is attained when we build our lives on foundations of relative nothingness. Serenity is acquired when we no longer resist the flow of life. Let God be your guide as you sing out a song about your unimportance. Come, come and join me on a safari that leads from the Garden of Nothingness to the Mountain of Everlasting Peace.

Members of Fellowship in Prayer in 80 countries form a global spiritual community of men and women—many of whom organize groups or correspond with each other in order to share spiritual insights and to pray together. If you would like to hear from or write to people in our Interfaith Network, please send your name and address to us at 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, and we will list it in our next issue.

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WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES — MYTHS AND STORIES OF THE WILD WOMAN ARCHETYPE
by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D., Ballantine Books, New York, 1992, 520 pgs, hardback, $23.00.

This exuberant, wise and gutsy book encourages and emboldens women to explore, embrace and live from our deepest instinctual Self. The personification of this Self is the Wild Woman archetype. The word "wild" is used here not in the destructive sense of being out of control but in its original meaning of living a natural life with innate integrity. This vital force has been looted, hobbled, mugged, driven back, and over-domesticated for untold generations in our culture.

The author, Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Jungian analyst and *cantadora* (storyteller) spins out fairytales, myths, and stories, plunging into her considerable storehouse of knowledge, wisdom, and earthy humor, and offers all this up to the reader by the bucketful. The people I know who have dipped into this book have been entranced into the thickets, caves, crannies, and mountain crags of their psyches, coming eye-to-eye, nose-to-nose, whisker-to-whisker with her life renewing "wildish nature." These encounters often can be numinous, stirring the inner Self into motion, awakening new possibility for life and for healing. This is what Jungian psychology is all about.

Psychology means knowing the soul, and soul is always a wildish creature. This book gives us a living taste of it. *Anne Walsh*

A STRATEGY FOR A LOSS OF FAITH: JUNG'S PROPOSAL
by John P. Dourley, Inner City Books, Toronto, Canada, 1992, 143 pages, paperback, $16.00.

A Jungian analyst and Roman Catholic priest with a Ph.D. in theology, John Dourley writes for the serious student of religions and Jungian thought. For him, the antidote to the sterility and shallow sensitivity of many of the world's "dysfunctional" spiritualities lies in a conscious rediscovery of the divine energies in the human psyche. Renewed awareness of the intimacy and immanence of the living God within can restore its natural vitality to the soul and help people experience suffering in a non-defeating and meaningful way. Like Meister Eckhart, Dourley knows that attempts to "fetch God from outside" can dim the sense of the sacred and lead to a feeling of powerlessness. *MFG*

We welcome your comments. Please send them to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, *291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.*

I have discovered—in the serious illness of my wife—the real and enduring power of prayer: not a petition of favors, not the turning of selfishness into virtue, and not the scores of reasons many people fall on their knees.

I discovered that perhaps the greatest strength of prayer is in its "comfort of sharing." In these past 8 weeks—from family, friends, and countless strangers—thought and emotion have crossed to my wife and in the power of this love and caring, she has been immensely comforted in a way that has been demonstrable and sustained. And of those who gave, there was an ennobling quality of their sharing efforts for her.

I knew then that prayer, in its dialogue of sharing, was a brightness on an often bleak human landscape, and that what it sent forth was perhaps the greatest communication of which we mortals are capable.

Frederick Olessi; Lawrenceville, NJ

[Fred Olessi is a member of the Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer—*Ed.*]

Last night I read the latest issue of *Fellowship in Prayer* from cover to cover—just couldn't put it down! The journal is part of my regular time for spiritual growth reading, listening meditation, and "thy will be done" prayer.

With each issue I am more aware of the height and depth, breadth and width outreach of your Oneness message—God is love *within* and *for* all creation.

Thank you for your continuing and ever-enlarging touch with God as Love through all spiritual traditions. It strengthens my faith that "all shall be well. . .and every manner of thing shall be well" for the whole of creation. And it helps me to hear and follow my inner guidance for my part in the divine plan. (I believe I'm speaking for many others I know who read *Fellowship in Prayer.*)

I keep you in my heart and my prayers, with thanksgiving for you and yours and for all your co-workers, known and unknown, in this ministry of Love. Shalom.

Emily Sargent Councilman

Here is a simple prayer I wrote (or maybe it wrote me):

May all beings be happy.
May all beings be peaceful.
May all beings be free.
  May the earth turn green again and
  may the animals and humans be free from fear.
May my thoughts and words and deeds
participate in the Healing Process and
not interfere with it.
  May I see how I interfere with
  the Healing Process as it takes place in
  my own life, human society and the natural world
  and may I find the wisdom and the strength
  to change.
May participation in the Healing Process
be the highest priority, the primary purpose,
of every day in my life.
  May the earth turn green again and
  may the animals and humans be free from fear.
May all beings be happy.
May all beings be peaceful.
May all beings be free.

Russell Smith; Columbus, OH

I'm very distressed about the recent events in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which are breeding such pain between Muslims and Christians. Could you help me to find a Muslim prayer partner who would pray with me for peace and understanding between Christians and Muslims worldwide?

Karen Rushen; Ann Arbor, MI

My community and I send you hearty good wishes. We enjoy your good journal and have found it very inspiring and interesting.

Avtar K. Pandit; Service to Humanity Center, Jaipur, India

FiP continues to be the best interfaith publication I know of.

Stephan Grosso; Walton, NY

Is there some way I could obtain a print of the photograph by Brooks Walsh on pages 12 and 13 of your December, 1992 issue? Something in me responds deeply to that picture and I should like very much to have a copy to frame.

Rosalind Foley; Lafayette, LA

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, either on 8 ½ by 11 inch paper or on a 5 ¼ inch floppy minidisk, 2S/2D, in WordPerfect and sent to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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